69. The total expenditure incurred upon forest establishments during the year has amounted to Rs. 4,53,218-1-5 :—

	Rs.	a.	p.
B. *I. a.*—Conservator's salary	18,000	0	0
B. *II. a.*—Conservator's travelling allowance ...	2,400	0	0
B. *I. b.*—Superior officers' salary	95,734	14	5
B. *II. b.*—Superior officers' travelling allowance ...	27,489	8	6
B. *I. c.*—Subordinate Protective Establishment salary .	2,46,901	13	7
B. *II. c.*—Subordinate Protective Establishment travelling allowance	13,924	12	8
B. *I. d.*—Office Establishments' salary	32,676	8	8
B. *II. d.*—Office Establishments' travelling allowance ...	12,199	4	3
A. *VIII. f.*—Cost of Temporary Establishment ...	3,891	3	4
Total ...	4,53,218	1	5

3)—GENERAL PROTECTION AND BREACHES OF FOREST LAWS.

70. The following table shows the number and result of prosecutions of forest offences in the year under report and in previous years, respectively :—

No.	Divisions.	1885-86.		1886-87.		Percentages of Failures.	
		Prosecutions.	Acquittals.	Prosecutions.	Acquittals.	1885-86.	1886-87
1	North Thána	18	11	42	10	61·1	23·8
2	South Thána	97	57	81	28	58·7	34·5
3	East Khándesh	46	13	25	9	28·2	36·
4	West Khándesh	44	16	53	21	36·3	39·6
5	Násik	35	8	150	18	22·8	12·
6	Ahmednagar	122	38	146	64	31·1	43·8
7	Poona	230	51	99	24	22·1	24·2
8	Sátára	42	17	87	71	40·4	81·7
9	Sholápur	36	21	88	25	58·3	28·4
10	Surat	24	...	4	2	...	50·
11	Panch Mahals	53	13	36	6	24·5	16·6
	Total ...	747	245	811	278	32·7	34·2

71. There were 57 cases, not disposed of, from last year at the beginning of this year. Of the 533 cases tried during the year, in respect of which convictions were obtained, 1,250 individuals were sentenced to punishment of different descriptions and degrees. The 278 cases acquitted affected 678 individuals, and at the close of the year 85 cases were standing over for completion of magisterial proceedings: they were distributed as under:—

South Thána	13 cases	Ahmednagar	14 cases.
East Khándesh	3 „	Poona	3 „
West Khándesh	38 „	Sátára	2 „
Násik	6 „	Sholápur	6 „

72. The percentage of failures in forest cases will always be high where the witnesses are chiefly fellow-villagers of the accused, who, in the interval between the discovery of the offence and the trial, are prone to be forgetful of the facts that came under their observation, and are found more ready to give evidence in favour of the accused than against him, and at variance with the account they originally gave of the transaction.

73. The forest offences in respect of which prosecutions have been instituted during the year, classified under the four different heads of crime prescribed by the Forest Department Code, appear as under :—

No.	Forest Division.	Character of Offences.				Remarks.
		Injury to forest by fire.	Unauthorised felling or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	
1	North Thána	...	41	.....	1	
2	South Thána	3	73	.....	5	
3	East Khándesh ...	10	9	2	2	
4	West Khándesh ...	4	24	55	6	
5	Násik	2	119	5	25	
6	Ahmednagar	...	33	74	31	
7	Poona	1	54	17	28	
8	Sátára	3	56	14	14	
9	Sholápur	...	9	55	24	
10	Surat	...	2	.....	2	
11	Panch Mahals... ...	...	35	.....	1	
	Total ..	23	455	222	139	

74. Of the 82 cases in the Ahmednagar Division, in respect of which convictions were obtained, the punishments awarded consisted of fines in 79 cases, and in imprisonment in 3 cases only.

75. In the 2 Thána forest divisions forest offences committed in "Protected Forests" and in lands provisionally notified under Section 4 of the Forest Act were dealt with under Section 43 of the Land Revenue Code by Assistant Collectors. The comparative result with last year is as under :—

No.	Forest Division.	1885-86.					1886-87.				
		Number of Cases.	Value of Forest Produce.	Acquittals.	Convictions.	Amount of Fines.	Number of Cases.	Value of Forest Produce.	Acquittals.	Convictions.	Amount of Fines.
			Rs. a. p.			Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.			Rs. a. p.
1	North Thána ...	6	25 6 0	...	5	21 6 0	13	150 4 0	...	13	223 1 3
2	South Thána ...	112	214 4 8	...	...	.....	141	.....	...	141	484 3 6
	Total ...	118	239 10 8	...	5	21 6 0	154	150 4 0	...	154	707 4 9

76. A comparative statement showing the number of cases compromised under Section 67 of the Forest Act is given below, as directed in Government Resolution No. 3527 of the 2nd May 1884 in the Revenue Department :—

No.	Forest Division.	Taken into Court.		Compromised under Section 67 of Forest Act.		Total Number of Cases	
		1885-86.	1886-87.	1885-86.	1886-87.	1885-86.	1886-87.
1	North Thána ...	18	42	39	23	57	65
2	South Thána ...	97	81	31	107	128	188
3	East Khándesh ...	46	23	144	117	190	140
4	West Khándesh ...	44	89	254	195	298	284
5	Násik	35	151	564	828	599	979
6	Ahmednagar ...	122	138	1,929	1,805	2,051	1,943
7	Poona	230	100	278	463	508	563
8	Sátára	42	87	67	54	109	141
9	Sholápur	36	88	461	625	497	713
10	Surat	24	4	4	10	28	14
11	Panch Mahals ...	53	36	56	78	109	114
	Total ...	747	839	3,827	4,305	4,574	5,144

77. The number of compounded cases has increased in the South Thána, East Khándesh, Násik, Poona, Sholápur, Surat, and Panch Maháls divisions, and has decreased in the other 4 divisions, but the greatest number of these cases appears again in the Ahmednagar Division. Mr. Wroughton, the Divisional Forest Officer, Poona, remarks :—

"It will be seen that, as ordered, the power of compounding has been fully availed of. But I regret to point out that the percentage of failures in prosecution cases is steadily increasing : in 1884-85 it was 18·4, in 1885-86 22·1, and now it has fallen to 24. The reason is not far to seek. The system of compounding offences is a great temptation to dishonesty in subordinates, who with ease can state to the accused that the offence has been compounded, and pocket the fine, but even without this it leads to a slipshod way of working up cases. The great object aimed at is to get the accused to confess, and agree to compound. I have seen it recorded by the Magistrate at Junnar that the members of a Panch, who had recorded that the accused confessed his guilt, stated before him that they only did so because it was clearly understood that the offences were to be compounded, and not prosecuted. The cases in question were a series of 6 or 7 in which influential men in the village had been in conspiration to cut and steal wood from the forest reserve of the village."

78. No doubt there are disadvantages and objectionable features in the system of compounding forest offences, but a great deal depends upon the way in which the section is worked. The Forest Act ignores intention. It is a forest offence to do anything that is punishable under the Act, or under any rule made under the Act; and a forest offence may be due to ignorance of fact, of law, or regulation, and not to malice. To such cases Section 67 should, the Conservator considers, be invariably applied, for a forest offence of any of these kinds is, from its nature or rather origin, a minor or trivial offence. Then, again, when forest produce of small value, in a forestry as well as marketable point of view, has been wilfully cut and appropriated at a long distance from the nearest Magistrate's Court—some forests are two or more days' journey distant—to take the detected offender, though his offence is neither trivial nor minor, to the Magistrate such a long journey, compelling witnesses to go also, and the forest guard, who detected the offender, to leave his "beat" for days together, is much to be deprecated, and Section 67 of the Forest Act provides a relief to all parties. The Conservator considers that the order requiring the Divisional Forest Officer to be consulted and his order obtained by the forest protective subordinates before a prosecution is entered in the case of a detected offender is not always worked correctly, and that forest prosecutions frequently break down on account of the delay entailed by a long correspondence. Section 52 of the Forest Act requires a report of seizure to be made to the Magistrate having jurisdiction to try the offence when there is reason to believe that a forest offence has been committed, and any property liable to confiscation has been seized. Such report should precede, the Conservator considers, the report to be made to the Divisional Forest Officer, and the latter can then order the case to be prosecuted, or otherwise disposed of.

79. Some detected offenders were released with warnings, as the assessed value of the property seized was considered to be so small as to render prosecution undesirable.

80. The protection of the forests against thefts of timber, &c., is very fair, except in the Thána District. Looking at the very large area of the "Reserved Forests," the very dense population of the districts in which the forests are, the number of prosecutions that occur in twelve months cannot be considered to be large. The condition that under the Forest Act a pass cannot be required of cart-loads of timber met in transport within forest limits greatly enhances the difficulty of protecting the forest estates, where as in the Thána District private lands growing trees are found to be intermingling with the State forest estates, and stolen wood from Government forests is removed under the name of timber from private lands; and with a numerically insufficient staff of forest guards it is not possible to extend efficient protection on all sides to the standing trees, the property of Government, in forest and other lands. Beats of 1,500 to 2,000 acres in size are too large for a single forest guard in the Thána divisions, where the Government tree property is all scattered about, and innumerable cart tracks traverse the forests in all directions. The forests near bandars in North Thána, such as of the Bassein Táluka, and the forests of Umbargaon on the frontier of

Daman territory are more exposed to plunder; while in South Thána the forests of the Kalyán, Murbád, Sháhápur, and Karjat are robbed much more than the forests of the Bhiwndi, Mokháda, and Khálápur ranges, which are at a distance from the railway line, and heavy thefts are unknown in them. A numerical increase of forest guards is required in these two divisions especially, for upon stipendiaries whose *raison dêtre* is forest conservancy, can alone dependence be placed for protecting the Government trees. A son of the police pátil of Wángni stole a quantity of teak timber from the Kalamboti Kusheoli forests of the Karjat Range, and conveyed it to the Wángni Railway Station under the name of timber from private lands, but he was caught at last, and was undergoing prosecution at the close of the year. With railway stations and with bandars in all directions, at each of which several timber-dealers' yards are located, where wood brought by villagers is purchased without inquiry as to how it has been obtained, and from where it has come, and is sent off to Bombay and Poona at once, and with a population of 90,000 wild tribes, such as Kathkaris, Thákurs, Varlis, whose subsistence is "Wood," and in addition to them at least half of the inhabitants of forest and other villages living upon carrying and carting at the season when agriculture does not demand their time and attention, the difficulties of protection against theft in the absence of a pass system are very great.

81. The number of cattle impounded in the several divisions during the year, under Section 69 of the Forest Act, for trespassing in closed portions of forest reservations was large in the Deccan divisions, as the following table shows:—

No.	Forest Division.	Cows and Bullocks.	Buffaloes.	Camels.	Horses.	Asses.	Sheep.	Goats.	Total.
1	North Thána ...	172	...	...	...	...	...	...	172
2	South Thána ...	70	4	...	...	...	...	...	74
3	East Khándesh ...	2,520	292	...	14	...	1,853	1,486	6,165
4	West Khándesh .	830	207	8	1	...	3,334	637	5,017
5	Násik	5,379	487	...	73	...	1,318	9,359	16,616
6	Ahmednagar ...	25,611	2,115	...	329	175	25,371	5,980	59,581
7	Poona	8,684	368	...	200	83	9,770	4,800	23,905
8	Sátára	4,403	662	...	70	1	3,366	1,026	9,528
9	Sholápur ...	9,524	1,090	...	88	46	4,982	669	16,399
10	Surat	55	33	...	...	...	...	...	88
11	Panch Mahals ...	16	89	...	...	...	332	856	1,293
	Total ...	57,264	5,347	8	775	305	50,326	24,813	1,38,838

82. Two beat guards were prosecuted by the Divisional Forest Officer of Ahmednagar for receiving bribes in connection with grazing in forests: one was convicted and punished, and the other acquitted; and 3 range forest officers, 2 round guards, and 19 beat guards were prosecuted by villagers for illegally impounding cattle for assault, &c., of which number 1 round guard and 4 beat guards were convicted. The round guard and 1 of the 3 beat guards have appealed.

83. 13,860 cattle found trespassing in the forest reserves of the Sholápur Division were released with a first warning, in accordance with the orders contained in Government Resolution No. 2437, dated 21st March 1885.

(*C*)—FOREST FIRES.

84. Fire-conservancy during the year shows a decided improvement in North Thána: in the Sálsette, Dáhánu, and Umbargaon ranges especially have the results been satisfactory. In Bassein fire traces were burnt as usual by the forest subordinates. In South Thána also is fire-conservancy improving: there were 201 fires reported during the year. In the Khándesh District fires prevailed to a slightly greater extent in the western division; in the eastern side there were 27 fires—one starting from Holkar's territory adjoining the Yával Sátpudás is responsible for burning 12,500 acres despite the efforts made to check and